



# Gold King Mine Emergency Response DRAFT Water Quality Data

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY • REGION 8 • AUGUST 2015

## Water Quality Data August 9, 2015

Today EPA released a detailed data table of the sampling in Cement Creek and the upper portions of the Animas River from August 5, the date of the incident, and August 6.

EPA expects to have additional data -from August 7 – available later today. This data is currently undergoing review and will be available to the public when that review is complete.

We acknowledge the urgency of getting this data to the public and also the frustration with the turnaround time for this information. Workers at the lab and data experts are working continuously to develop and review the information.

It is important for the public to know that we must collect, transport, analyze, evaluate and—because of its importance—accurately publicize the data.

The data table contains a list of analyzed constituents, largely metals, and their numeric value in micrograms per liter, which is equal to parts per billion, or ppb.

The data table released today includes updates to the information released by EPA on August 7.

The incident, which occurred on August 5, caused an increase in concentrations of total and dissolved metals as the contaminated mine water moved downstream. These concentrations began to trend toward pre-event conditions by August 6.

August 7 and 8 data, when it is available, will inform us whether the trend towards pre-event conditions continues.

Note: Total metals analysis for water samples includes the metals content both dissolved in the water and present in the particulates in the water. Typically a dissolved metals analysis of a water sample is performed by removing the particulates with a filter, then analyzing the filtered water for metals.

**A Public Call Center has been set up at La Plata County's Emergency Operations Center. Please call 970-385-8700 to get answers and request assistance with well sampling.**

## Who can answer my questions?

There will be a live-streamed public meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, August 9, 2015 at Miller Middle School Auditorium, 2608 Junction Street, Durango. The link listen to the public meeting will be posted to the La Plata County website at <http://www.co.laplata.co.us/emergency>, San Juan Basin Health Department's Website at [www.sjbhd.org](http://www.sjbhd.org), La Plata County Government Facebook and San Juan Basin Health



# Gold King Mine Emergency Response

## FAQs

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### How can I get the latest information?

As additional information is received, it will be posted to the La Plata County website at <http://www.co.laplata.co.us/emergency>, San Juan Basin Health Department's Website at [www.sjbhd.org](http://www.sjbhd.org), La Plata County Government Facebook and San Juan Basin Health Department Facebook. The EPA has set up a website for the event at [www.epaosc.org/GoldKingMine](http://www.epaosc.org/GoldKingMine). Links to this site are provided on the County's website and San Juan Basin Health Department's website as well.

### Is the drinking water safe?

People supplied by Durango's public water supply can feel confident the drinking water is safe. Additional...Drinking water intakes on the river were closed before the contaminated water reached the intakes. The EPA is asking **(DELETE that)** residents with wells in close proximity to the Animas River who have concerns about their well water to contact the Call Center at 970-385-8700 to have their well sampled for heavy metal contaminants. Residents should not take their own samples; the EPA will send technicians to sample the water from homes. If discoloration is observed or residents **have concerns, (DELETE are highly concerned)** the EPA will provide bottled drinking water. Bottled water delivery and distribution centers are being established to provide alternative drinking water to the impacted public.

### What water quality data is being collected?

EPA and others have amassed an extensive historical data record of water quality at the mine and downstream in Cement Creek and the Animas River. Comparing data being collected as part of the emergency response to this historical record will give us an indication of the spill's impacts and ultimately its return to pre-event conditions.

EPA will be posting its raw data as well as data summary reports on its website ([www.epaosc.org/GoldKingMine](http://www.epaosc.org/GoldKingMine)) as they become final. (Added period)

### When will it be safe to reopen our intakes on the river for drinking water and irrigation?

We are evaluating the water column data as we receive it and will be working with Colorado and local government officials to determine when to reopen both drinking water intakes and irrigation intakes and to open the river to use for recreation.

### Did the release kill fish?

MOVED THESE 2 SENTENCES TO BEGINNING OF PARA. We will continue to work with USFWS and Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife (CPW) to evaluate fish kills. CPW placed 108 sentinel fish at two locations in the river and one in a control tributary. As of Aug. 7, one fish mortality was reported.

We have not received information related to any other fish kills in the river and (Delete but) encourage the public to call the Call Center at 970-385-8700 with (Delete if you have) any information related to fish or other wildlife impacts.

### How will EPA assist with response costs?

EPA is working expeditiously to get contracts in place with local government entities to provide services in support of EPA's response action to address environmental impacts of the release. EPA is also assessing all available legal and administrative avenues to address claims for damages resulting from this release.

### What resources are deployed to address the incident?

As of Aug. 8, more than 40 EPA employees and contractors have been (Delete 27 EPA employees and 13 EPA contractors are) deployed to the incident. They (Delete These employees are) supported by teams in